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CALIFORNIA LATINO LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

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Hope, inspiration reflected among winners of Latino Spirit Awards

SACRAMENTO – A retired judge, executives for Spanish TV, Grammy Award winners, an Olympian athlete and the memory of a longtime legislative staffer were among those honored today during ceremonies for the Fourth Annual Latino Spirit Awards by California's Latino Legislative Caucus.

Held in honor of Cinco de Mayo celebrations, the leadership and inspiration stories of Latino entertainers, athletes and community leaders were cited for best exemplifying Latino values, culture and tradition.

"Opportunities for Latinos have increased throughout the years and the people we awarded today are evidence of the hard work past generations have accomplished," Sen. Martha Escutia, D-Whittier, chair of the Latino Caucus, said. "Latinos have gained a place in the political arena, but also are making strides in the arts and sports."

Assembly Joe Coto, D-San Jose, agreed.

"It is an honor to recognize these great individuals," Coto said. "They are each representative of the talent and ambition of the Latino community and truly are role models for our Latino youth and examples of excellence in their respective professions."

The honorees:

- **Bill Chavez** (posthumously) – California State Legislature.
- **Moctesuma Esparza** – Filmmaker.
- **Maria Gutierrez** – VP/GM, Univision, Fresno.
- **Monica Lozano** – Publisher/CEO, *La Opinión*.
- **Rueben Martínez** – 2004 MacArthur Fellow.
- **Marcela Medina** – VP/GM Univision & TeleFutura, Bay area.
- **Jaime Nieto** – 2004 U.S. Olympian.
- **Ozomatli** – 2005 Grammy Award winner.
- **Cruz Reynoso** – Former Associate Justice, state Supreme Court.

Past honorees include pioneers in film, athletics, literature, music and public service. Many have overcome tremendous obstacles, rising to role models and community leaders. Past honorees include: Carlos Santana, Grammy Award-winning recording artist; Oscar De La Hoya, world boxing champion; Andy Garcia, Academy Award-nominated actor; and Jeff Garcia, NFL quarterback.

For more, including biographies of the winners, visit the Latino Caucus Web site at the address below.

(Formed in 1973, the Latino Legislative Caucus draws on the unique background and experiences of its nine Senators and 18 Assembly members to address issues affecting every Californian. More at [HTTP://DEMOCRATS.ASSEMBLY.CA.GOV/LATINOCAUCUS](http://DEMOCRATS.ASSEMBLY.CA.GOV/LATINOCAUCUS))